

NEOCOLONIALISM, LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN PRESENT MEXICO

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“...ceux qui ont été vaincus...sont
ceux à qui par définition on a retiré la
parole! Et si, cependant, ils parlaient, ils
ne parleraient pas leur propre langue.
On
leur a imposé une langue étrangère...La
langue des vaincus a-t-elle jamais
existé?”
“La torture, c’est la Raison.”
Michel Foucault

This paper is still a work in progress; it is an initial attempt of analysis whose broad implications are related to my research on the discourse of neocolonialism in Mexico. I have based my study on Michel Foucault’s notion of “discourse”¹ associated with a series of political events (*événements*)² through which power is exercised (*véhiculé*) and directed (Foucault, 1994; vol. 3:465). The discourse analysis which I undertake is not related with the study of the speaking subject, but with the analysis that “examines the different ways where the discourse is implicated within a political and strategic system and by which power functions”(Ibid); and also through the study of power relations which, according to Foucault “must be studied in terms of tactics and strategies, in terms of rules and random occurrences, in terms of games (*enjeu*) and objectives.” (Foucault, 1994:vol. 3: 542.).

The neocolonial discourse in which I am concerned does not refer to language and to linguistic terms, but to discursive practices,³ political and economical games, games of domination, “vocabularies that are retaken”, of power actions and resistance to power. My aim is to capture these strategies,

tactics, and relations of power that the neocolonial discourse exhibits in the conduct of the cultural policy of Mexico through language. My first way of approaching the analysis of this neocolonial discourse is by sketching a series of maps, of social, political and cultural plans, such as: the government of individuals; the defense of the Spanish language; the neocolonial order of discourse; the political economy of the Spanish language. This set of maps is sometimes superimposed, and goes beyond political frontiers and historical limits. My purpose, at this moment, is to outline the different regions where the neocolonial discourse in Mexico is being formulated, and where the discursive practices are being exerted, all at the same time. Further research will allow me to depict the intended Mexican culture drawn by the Mexican and Spanish conservative political forces, and whose purpose is to set a new Spanish speaking border, and a new global Spanish language in Mexico and in the American continent.

The current neo-colonialism, as in the Spanish colonial times between the 16th and the 19th centuries, is using the Spanish language as a political tool for transmission and diffusion of the fundamentals codes of a culture, such as values, techniques, sensory patterns, etc.(Cf. Foucault,1966:11.) The Spanish colonial language as a technology of power, produced different and various effects, such as the evangelization in the Catholic faith and the constitution of Spanish speaking subjects⁴ submitted to the colonial power-subjects who were valid and available interlocutors to follow the Catholic faith and to respect and to obey the monarchist power. Nowadays, the discourse of neocolonialism is also using the Spanish language through the television, radio, press, internet, movie, as a cultural power. Under the globalization chess game, Spanish language is the bishop that sets the stage for the Mexican-Spanish Catholic conservative culture all over Mexico and the American continent. The neo-colonial Spanish discourse, as well as the colonial discourse in the past, were made possible through the implementation of power relations, that permit certain actions to act "upon actions of others"(Foucault,1983:223),through a system of differentiation determined, among others factors by, "linguistic or cultural differences (1983:223), [and]... by the effects of the word." (1983:223.).

The Government Of Individuals

During the Spanish Empire in Mexico and in the American Continent there has been an interaction between the grammatical imposition of Spanish language, the empire's usurpation of land over the aboriginal landowners, and the forced conversion of the natives to Catholicism through evangelization. All of these constitute the cultural, social and economical bases of domination, which is subjected to a political and state rationality, while at the same time is being related to "economic, social, cultural and technological processes", (Foucault,1994:vol.4:827.), whose mayor characteristic is the" integration of individuals and communities into the entire policy." (vol.4:827.). Mexico is currently experiencing a deeply conservative offensive which was gestated about a decade ago. This political game has been constructed between the most conservative Mexican political forces, and the present Spanish government and employers, both left and right wing, as a re-establishment of the colonial alliances.

In a recent interview in the Mexican newspaper *Reforma*, president Aznar of the Spanish government stated: "we have a vocation of permanence with Latin America "(August 3, 2003,)⁵. This continent is one of the priority axis of the Spanish foreign policy.(Cf.Rajoy Mariano, Milenio, September 3, 2003). To the left, Felipe Gonzalez, former president of the PSOE(Spanish Socialist Party) declared that he was concerned about the unification of the Latin American peoples within their diversity.(Cf.Felipe González, Reforma, June 17,2001). The Mexican-Spanish conservative forces are currently devising a neocolonial cultural domination--similar to that of the former empire-- that is focused on the normalization of the Spanish language for all the Spanish speakers, with the purpose to integrate them all into a single cultural policy. This process seems to be in response to the plurality, variations, and dissemination of the Spanish language in the American continent, not only as an aim or will of power, or to regain the glory of the ancient Spanish Empire, or as Balibar hints to, in order to allow "the imaginary obsession of the revenge"(Balibar,1991:70) to take place, but also due to the astonishing development, of the *Spanglish* in the USA,⁶ and to the constant transformation of Spanish language in America down the Rio Bravo

in ways that do not correspond to the will of the purists of the Spanish Language.

The defense of the Spanish language obeys also the necessity of avoiding the proliferation of new words of the different *Spanishes* that are spoken in the American Continent and that penetrate the culture of Spanish speakers in the USA. Thus the vocation of permanence, as president Aznar has argued, is not only a will of permanence in Latin America but everywhere in the American continent where Spanish language is spoken. For the Spanish Kingdom policy, the intrusion within the USA cannot be accomplished without the acceptance of Mexico, because as César Antonio Molina Sánchez, director of the Instituto Cervantes of the Spanish Language, explains,

"we cannot go as snipers into the United States of America, because our resources are scarce and we must promote a new Pan-Hispanism vision with the support of Mexico,...the future of the Spanish language in the world can only be understood by a simple and necessary idea: the collaboration between Mexico and Spain to spread out our language through the world mainly over the USA, Brazil, and the north of Europe." (La Jornada, 2004, July 11).⁷

Such an affirmation reveals the will of power of the social conservatism, both Mexican and Spanish, that follow the 16th century idea that the strength of an empire depends on words much more than on weapons.⁸

Mexico is a willing ally in this strategy of pan-Hispanism not only because it is a neighbor of the United States, and because more than 10 millions Mexicans live in that country, making of Mexico the *natural* way to culturally infiltrate the USA, but also because the strategy to promote a pan-Hispanism implies a new geopolitics which, at the same time it defines its territory supports and maintain such geopolitics.

To undertake the pan-Hispanic geopolitics technologies, are indispensable, what Foucault calls *téchnes* and which are "practical rationalities governed by a conscious objective" (Foucault, 1994: vol.4:285), whose aim is to govern through different technologies such as, the "government of individuals, the government of souls, the government of the self by itself, the government of the families, the government of

children."(Foucault, 1994:vol.4:285). The practical technology of the "system which allows for the use of signs, meanings, symbols and significations"(Foucault, 1991:48), is the one that acts over the Spanish speaking subjects, and at the same time, delineates a cultural strategic that also permits the definition of political actions out of the cultural sphere. For instance, the defense of the Mexican workers in the United States is such a political action, because their defense is correlative to the constitution of the Spanish speaking subject, who cannot be left adrift to be constituted by other political forces in "their souls, thoughts, conducts, or any other way of living "(Foucault,1991:48).

On the other hand, pan-Hispanism also means, as Prince Felipe of Asturias points out, "to promote Hispanism as a common language not only for communication, but for identification among cultures."(Milenio,p.42, July 20,2004)⁹. So the Spanish language for the conservative forces, as in the 16th century, is a means to create cultural identifications that give the population the feeling of belonging to a group, and to be social and political partners. But language is used also as a mechanism of government that structures "the practices through which men are guided from the administration until education"(Foucault,1994:vol.4:93). For such political forces, language and culture are the same, but the Mexican and Spanish cultures are not alike, they may have the same linguistic and cultural and political roots, but the Spanish language has had different uses for both cultures.

For the Spaniards, the language has been the language of domination, while for the Mexicans, Spanish has been, during 400 years of colonial history, the language of obedience and submission. Spanish has been the language of power for the former, and the language of resistance for the latter, so identification can only be possible on the premises of accepting that Mexicans are still living under the colonial political regime, the one that puts on one side the Spanish people, the *peninsulares*, white people who have plenty of virtues for being Catholics and for speaking Spanish--or for speaking "in Christian" as it is said¹⁰--and on the other side, the subjected population that has no soul, is ignorant, and must be taught to speak, and write and think in Spanish, not because they are mute, but as Foucault points out, because as they are dominated, a language and concepts are imposed on them, and the

"ideas that have been imposed are the marks of the scars that have impregnated their thoughts. I would say that, they have also impregnated their corporal attitudes"(Foucault,1994:vol,3:391).

The background that pushes a policy which identifies as a unity language and culture is another power mechanism, that is racism.¹¹ Racism is to be understood not as an attitude to dispraise those who have genetic, social, or linguistic differences, but as a social relationship that is the basis of the international caste system which have been strengthening the idea of a "white superiority" and the "incompatibility of different ways of living"(Balibar,1991:39).Racism is also a "global strategy of the social conservatisms"(Foucault,2000:65-66),"that arises over a sparkling basis of social Darwinism"(Foucault, 1994:vol.4:279),and is a fundamental element of social normalization.

We have, then, the purity of races that implies the purity of language, so the defense of Spanish language and culture also means to go against the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity. In other terms, the pan-Hispanist discourse is focused on the extermination of differences and on the enhancement of the linguistic superiority of European Spanish, which at the same time is a reinforcement of the affirmative power of the "European meaning"(Said,2004:300). According to Foucault "the peaceful order of subordinations"(Foucault,2002:52.) has been possible due to a kind of primitive and permanent war, the war of races which is at the bottom of all social relations--such as the division of labor, exploitative relationships, inequality (Cf.Foucault,2002:52.)--and is the one that "undermines our society and divides it in a binary mode"(Cf.p.52).

The discourse of the war of races is linked to a series of elements that insures its preservation and development such as:

"ethnic differences, languages differences; differences of strength, energy, vigor and violence; differences of savagery and barbarism; conquest and subjugation of one race over another"(Foucault,2000:64).

The current strategy of the pan-Hispanist discourse is to erase the history of the violence of colonialism and racism, and to re-elaborate a new history between Spain and its former colonies and to show that the relation between submitted peoples and the monarchic Empire, has always been of cooperation and understanding. The Spanish king Juan Carlos de Borbón asserted:

"our language was never one of imposition, but of encounter; speaking Castellano was not imposed on anyone, there were the most diverse people who wanted, under total freedom, to make the language of Cervantes their own."(Reforma, 2001, April,27).¹²

But the pan-Hispanist discourse strategy is not only plenty of a symbolic violence, but also of misunderstanding of history, because the encounter between Spain and the native peoples of the American continent, to the contrary of the king's statement, meant loss of culture, languages, populations, in other words, genocide. The figures below outline the genocide that took place during the first years of the conquest and colonization in Mexico and Latin America

"There, in America a dreadful genocide occurred. At the beginning of the 16th century there were 80 million native people, and by the middle of that century there were left, for different reasons, 10 million people. And in Mexico, there were 23.1 million inhabitants in 1519, from different cultures: Aztec, Olmecs, Toltecs, Mayans, but in 1593 there was only 1.7 millions left". (Enrique Miret Magdalena, 1998,El País, February, 9). ¹³

The Defense Of Spanish Language

During the last decade, more or less, cultural Spanish institutions have been developing with success in Mexico, such as the Instituto Cervantes whose aims are

*the formation of professors in Spanish

*the consolidation of "the teaching of Spanish language in USA hand in hand with *our Mexican brothers*"(Reforma June 2, 2004, italics added)¹⁴.

*the expedition of diplomas of certification of the Spanish language(DELE) in the 71 headquarters of the Instituto Cervantes all over the world (Cf.Reforma June 27,2004), and in the centers of the National Autonomous University of Mexico(UNAM),located in San Antonio, Texas, Chicago, Illinois, and soon in Los Angeles California, Quebec, Canada, and Sao Paulo, Brazil. These activities will begin in the academic year of 2005-2006(Ibid.).

Both, UNAM and Instituto Cervantes have outlined a common strategic alliance to place Spanish language in a predominant role, in order to defend the

" Spanish language as a defense mechanism of our culture,and our values something that have been demonstrated that functions very well since the XV century".(La Jornada, 2003, October, 17).¹⁵

The purpose of the policy of defense and expansion of the Spanish language is also concerned, at the same time, with the deviation of the norms of what speaking and writing Spanish properly means. Such policy is accomplished through 'techniques of normalization', whose goal is to "dominate and to submit individuals"(Foucault,1994:vol.2:793)and to standarize the Spanish language, according to the European Spanish.

The normalization of the speaking subject is operated through "local tactics of domination"(Foucault,2000:51) in the scholarship and apprenticeship apparatus, where a multiplicity of submission mechanisms are exercised as in the exams to get diplomas of competence in Spanish, where the normalizations mechanism are exerted, among others areas, from the "wise men to the ignorant men, from the teacher to the apprentice"(Foucault,2000:51). Normalization is also exercised through discursive practices, which are not only modes of production of discourses, but ways to set up norms, that take place through technical means, as in the

*Pan-Hispanic dictionary of doubts of the Spanish language whose purpose is to become "an observatory of neologism"(Reforma, October 20, 2001)

*Institutions, "in schemas of conduct, in types of transmission and diffusion, in pedagogical forms"(Foucault,1989:10), such as the Conferences of the Spanish language¹⁶; and the Conferences of Hispanists¹⁷ whose goal is to promote, as Prince Felipe of Asturias has argued recently, going across the traces of the Spanish language, "that advances in its *natural uses* (Milenio, p.42, July 20, 2004, italics added)¹⁸, and to go "beyond the language and to go deep, mainly, in the human being"(Ibid).

The strategy of the defense of the Spanish language is focused on preventing the development of local languages; re-establishing the philosophy of humanism; to re-elaborate the colonial history as magnificent and harmless; and breaking down the cultures and the collective willingness linked to the new Spanish local languages, and re-assigning them the place of subordinated cultures, languages and knowledge in the neo-colonial scenario. The aim of this cultural strategy is to create a single Spanish language for the world, so as to constitute a Pan-Spanish language as a *lingua franca* without "cultural deformations"--as *Spanglish*-- or as the submitted knowledge, that are under-qualified knowledge, as idioms, or local expressions, that are "insufficiently elaborated, naïve and hierarchical inferior knowledge, under the level of the knowledge or the scientific requirements" (Foucault,1994,vol.3:164.)

At the same time that idioms are minimized, because they are outside the norms, and because "badly spoken" languages are not much reliable, there is a reinforcement of the original and pure language of Cervantes, as a way to reintroduce the European's culture domination in Mexico and in the American Continent. The emergence of different *Spanishes* or the *Spanglish* in the American Continent is considered, by members of the Association of the Academies of the Spanish languages, as "a ruin and a failure" [because we are] "tending towards to a curious homogenization of the language...[and] everybody is eliminating local ways of speaking."(Humberto López Morales, Reforma ,24 July, 2004)¹⁹. But the wished for homogenization of the Spanish

language under the rules of the Association of the Academies of the Spanish languages, has cultural, social and politically negative consequences:

*In first place, it denies new social identities that come from the scientific, technological and communication world, maintain thus the Spanish speakers out of the competence level of such world, because language is always

linked to styles of life and thought. None of the countries of the former Spanish Catholic Empire and its colonies, including Spain, have had a remarkable development in science, or in technology. The lack of scientific and technological adaptability of the Spanish language might explain the emergence of the *Spanglish*, as the need of the people to communicate among them using new technological vocabularies, such as the vocabulary of the personal computers and of “the self-governing household”(Hay in Bratich, 2003:179), as well as that of the emerging communication technologies.

*Secondly, this will of homogenization is orientated towards keeping the construction of the social inequality rooted in the colonial power, such as the generalized notion that those who don't know how to speak Spanish properly are inferior and incompetent.

*Thirdly, the necessity of Spanish language homogenization, is against the emergence of new language, and it shows at the same time , the incomprehension from the purist of language, that language, is self productive, it produces itself , changes and proliferates until another grammar marks its limits and a new language is produced, as it happened, for instance, with Latin in Europe, a language that became Spanish, French, Italian, Portuguese, etc.

The negative consequences outlined above intend to hide the political intentions of Pan-Hispanism:

*First, to resist the transnational and virtual territory of the internet, that transgresses the limits of sovereign states and where the most used language is English, which represents currently eighty percent of the languages used on websites.

*Second, to create Spanish as the second language in importance of the American continent, despite the growing importance of English due to the new scientific, technological and communicational usage of English—even though the Spanish language does not provide scientific or technological terms, nor a new vocabulary for the contemporary network society.

*Third, to avoid the radical transformation of Spanish language in the American continent from one country to another, because changes of language would suppose the extinction of Spanish language in these lands.

The neocolonial Mexican-Spanish political discourse in a world dominated by high technology is a conservative one that is masked by the Hispanist and humanistic discourse. Although there are many aspects of humanism, I believe that the neo-colonial discourse is protected under the humanistic attitude that is "distrustful, hostile and critical in relation to science." (Foucault, 1994: vol 4: 573.), and which resists it through the institutions and through discourses focused on the defense and the setting up of a new relevance of the Spanish language, articulated in the name of, and though the masterful narrative of, Cervantes, as the outstanding symbol of Hispanism and humanism.

The intention of the humanistic-Hispanism discourse is also to avoid that the Anglo-Saxon cultural values and the Protestantism ethics undermining the Christian culture of poverty. This discourse comes along with the willingness of the conservative forces to create a new nation of Spanish speakers within an Anglo-Saxon nation, and thus to maintain the named "Hispanics" in the USA unconsciously loyal to the Spanish language, and to recapture the old territories that nowadays constitute part of the United States of America. Carlos Fuentes, the Mexican writer, is very clear on respect to the new conquest:

"When we speak about the re-conquest of the old extension of the Spanish Empire in North America, we must attend to the alert call that asks us to go beyond the count of how many people speak our language, to the question whether Castellano is competitive in the scientific, communication, philosophical and literary world".
(Reforma, October 20, 2001).²⁰

The Neocolonial Order Of Discourse

The neocolonial discourse is rooted in an old and very effective motto, Castilian Spanish is **"the language of conquest and management"** (Miller,2002:17). Since the very first years of the Spanish Empire the imperial grammarian "Antonio de Nebrija wrote in his *Gramática Española*, published in the fateful year of 1492, that "Language is Empire" (Miller,2002:17). Since then, up to our days, there has been a "fight for the construction of meaning"(2002:17), between the former Empire and its submitted populations.

A very important Mexican intellectual Miguel León Portilla,²¹ in the Conference of Hispanists that took place at Monterrey, updated the slogan: *language is the fatherland*(Milenio, p.42, July 20,2004). If Nebrija represents the will to power of the former Spanish empire, León Portilla is, in Foucault's order of discourse, a commentator of Nebrija's and the Spanish Kingdom will of power. Both authors, the 16th century one, and the 21st century one, are inscribed within the elements of the Foucault's order of discourse: commentaries, author, name, and books.

As Foucault has argued, commentaries are things that have been said once and remain "because they are supposed to have something of a wealth or secret." (Foucault, 1971:24). A commentary, as a function of the order of the discourse, seeks to say what has already been said and to repeat it. (Cf. Foucault, 1971:26-27). The aim of commentary within a discourse is to prevent it from random games, events, while it intends to pass what is commented as a new discourse.

On the other hand, an author, is not according to Foucault, a creative and joyful person, nor is he an infinite source of meanings; an author is the principle of discourse through "which locks are put to avoid the free circulation, free manipulation, free composition, decomposition, and the re-composition of fiction".(Foucault, 1994:vol.1:811).

The way to restrict idioms, or local languages in the neocolonial discourse, apart from the author and commentaries, is through the name of Cervantes, a name that intends to be a neutral support of all the activities of the Instituto Cervantes of the Spanish language. The name of Cervantes as an author, and of an institution that defends the Spanish culture and language abroad, functions as a banner, an emblem, a symbolic violence, that silences the whispers of the defeated by the Spanish colonization, those who do not speak their own language anymore, those that without being mute have suffered the imposition of a foreign language.

On the other hand, the name of Cervantes as the author *par excellence* within the Spanish culture has the aim of avoiding the encounter with scattered languages, and submitted knowledge, because the name of an author, as Cervantes', is totally indifferent to the daily words spoken by the people, since the name of an author means that each word must be received "in a certain way, and that in a given culture, a certain status must be given." (Foucault, 1994: vol. 1: 798).

The constitutive elements of the order of discourse, commentaries as well as author and name, do not intend to avoid and restrict proliferation of the world's meaning, in which economy is not the only resource of wealth, but their own discourse and meaning.

The Political Economy Of The Spanish Language

The political purpose of neocolonial discourse is not only to produce, to reinforce, and to defend the speaking Spanish subjects, as the construction of a discourse does not depend on isolated discursive facts, since discourse is part of a series of events that are linked to others "events that belong to the economic system, or the political field, or the Institutions." (Foucault, 1994: vol. 3: 467).

The neocolonial discourse's intent is that, at the same time speaking Spanish subjects are produced, consumers of products of the Spanish language or derivations from it are created. The neocolonial discourse is orientated thus to the production of consumers of books, magazines, newspapers, of films, books, and television programs, written in foreign

languages and translated into Spanish. At the same time that production of producers and consumers is accomplished, both are normalized by inciting them to the use of the Spanish language, an incitation that pushes the growth of the Spanish language market. In short, the neocolonial discourse of the defense of the Spanish language and of the unity of the Spanish speakers, is focused on consumers of the mass media products which are inscribed within the mechanisms of economy and power.

The political concern of the Mexican-Spanish conservative forces to attain a cultural unity of the Spanish speakers in Mexico and in the American Continent is focused on the development of normalization through micro-techniques of power, such as Spanish exams, and dictionaries, not only as means to correct the distorted languages, but as Foucault has stated, because they are sub-powers, indispensable to attain surplus-value²². Both, economic and linguistic relationships, are deeply linked on the same objective, that of making domination possible in order to obtain political and economical benefits as well as to conserve power itself. In other words, it is in order to necessarily increase economic benefit that cultural relationships, focused on language, are intensified.

The publishing industry, the press, television and radio stations in Mexico, and in the American Continent, are the means through which the Mexican-Spanish businesses are finding a place in the globalized world. Since they don't have scientific and technological merchandises they sell words, language: for these conservative forces, the Spanish language is their business.

The Spanish language business represents a huge economic potential since in Mexico and in the American continent resides almost 400 millions of Spanish speakers, out of which about 100 millions are Mexican, and about 15 million of them live in the USA. These subjects are the economic force on which the neocolonial discourse can rely. At the same time, such force is supported by the pan-Hispanist discourse and by the Spanish language institutions, whose discourse constantly highlights the importance of the Spanish language all over the world with the purpose of having its merits and benefits acknowledged.²³

In Mexico, the Spanish editorial industry sold in 2002 almost 14 millions of books (Cf. La Jornada July 26,2004,). In the United States of America, there are about 1300 of different publications in Spanish, 250 of them are weekly magazines, 24 are newspapers that sell more than a million copies. On the whole, the commercial activities of the “Hispanic” community in the USA generates 328 thousand million dollars yearly(Cf.Carlos Fuentes Reforma, May 4,2000), and the Hispanic market is the one that is growing most in the USA, as it represents 700 hundred million dollars in purchase power and it has been calculated that for 2010 it will reach one trillion of dollars. (Cf.Ibid).

But the interest in the Mexican-Spanish speaking market is also due to the huge crisis of the Spanish publishing industry. They publish much more books than books are read in Spain. In that country in 2002 54 millions of copies were returned to publishing houses.From 252,000 copies of books, in 2002, 145,000 were returned: 107, 000 were stored, while others of them were destroyed, and others were sent to Latin America.(Cf. El País, October 3,2003). The crisis is thus of overproduction because recently data shows that the 47% of the Spanish people never reads a book.(El País, April 12,2003). On the other side, Mexico has suffered an invasion of Spanish books, mainly their remnants, books that can be sold in the supermarkets and producing in consequence, the closure of libraries in the country²⁴ The crisis of the publishing industry in Spain and in Mexico is due, in part, to the development of the use of internet, which is mostly in the English language. Those are economic reasons that push the discourse of the defense of the Spanish language, as well as cultural policies such as the unity of an Hispanic culture as a whole.

Therefore, the economic crisis of the publishing industry is also a crisis of subjectivity, because the economic benefits of the Spanish business depend on the success of the construction and reinforcement of the speaking Spanish subjects, the one who communicates, who writes, who speaks, whose styles of thought are in Spanish. In this sense the speaking subject and its subjectivity²⁵ are connected and are the result of different games of power, of force, of signs, and of normalization techniques.²⁶

Under the colonial domination in Mexico, Catholic missionaries used to be the owners of the Spanish language, because they were the ones who taught it to the native peoples. Nowadays, the owners of the Spanish language are the mass media transnational corporations, both Mexican and Spanish, that operate in Mexico, Spain, The United States of America and in Central and South America. Those groups²⁷ also try to unify the Spanish language and to promote the Hispanist culture²⁸, and intend to culturally and politically control and dominate the Spanish speaking market in the American Continent where the majority of Spanish speakers of the world reside.

The emphasis on the unity of Spanish culture and the defense of the Spanish language encouraged by the Mexican-Spanish conservative political forces, that can be read almost every day in the Mexican newspapers, seems to be a re-visitation of Nebrija's slogan of the 15th century: "language is empire", which means also, in Foucault's words, that, "we are unassailable linked to discursive events. In one sense we are nothing else but what have been said, it's been centuries, months, weeks." (Foucault, 1994: vol. 3: 468).

There is definitely an intersection, a superimposition of maps, between the today's Mexican reality and its colonial past. Under the current globalized geopolitical, the pan-Hispanist discourse also represents for the conservative forces a political challenge, that of re-gaining the culture of the Spanish Catholic Empire in their former territory in the American Continent, and of retake the values of Catholicism, as it is shown by the third evangelization that is taken place nowadays in Mexico. So it is possible to say that the conservative forces act by a new slogan "the American Continent for the Spanish kingdom."

NOTES

1. Discourse analysis is also understood by Foucault not only in their linguistic meaning, but as "games, strategic games of action and reaction, of answers and questions, of domination and retraction, and also of fight. The discourse is this regular set of linguistic facts at a certain level, and of polemical and strategic facts on another."(Foucault,1994:vol.2:539 "The discourse is constituted by the difference between of what could be correctly said in a certain epoch(under the grammar and logic rules), and what is effectively said."(vol.1:685)

2.- Events (*événement*) are central in Michel Foucault's thought. For him, "an event is not a decision, a treaty, an origin, a kingdom or a battle, but a relation of force that is reverted, a confiscated power, a retaken vocabulary and returned to the original users, a domination that becomes weak, ease, poisons itself, another one that makes its entrance with a mask. The forces that are playing in history do not obey neither to a destiny nor to a mechanic, but rather to random fights. The forces do not show themselves as successive forms with a primordial intention: they do not take the aspect of a result. They always appear in the singular randomness of an event."(Foucault,1994:vol: 2:148.).

3.-For Foucault, "the discursive practices are not merely ways of fabrication of discourses. They are formed in the technical sets, in institutions, in the schemas of behavior, in types of transmission and diffusion, in pedagogical forms that both impose and maintain them."(Foucault,1994:vol.2:241.).

4.- "There are two meanings of the word *subject*; subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to."(Foucault,1983:212).

5.-In the original Spanish is:"tenemos (en Latinoamérica) vocación de permanencia".

6.-- Ilan Stavans, a Mexican professor at Amherst College, Massachusetts, points out: "we are more Hispanic in the United States than the whole population in Spain...It seems to me ridiculous that these people of the Academy[of the Royal Spanish Language GL) believe that the only thing to do is to forget what we speak and try to impose a strange language". (Reforma, Suplemento Enfoque,p.16. October 8, 2000).

7. In the original Spanish is:" nosotros (España)no podemos ir de francotiradores en Estados Unidos, pues nuestros medios son escasos y debemos fomentar una nueva vision panhispánica con el apoyo de México...el futuro del idioma español en el mundo sólo se puede entender desde una idea simple y necesaria:la colaboración entre México y España para propagar nuestra lengua por el resto del orbe, sobre todo en Estados Unidos, Braisl y el norte de Europa".

- 8.- Antonio Elio de Nebrija who was inspired in the philosophy of language of Lorenzo Valla (Rome 1406-1457), convinced Isabel de Castilla that the "constitution of an empire depends on words much more than on weapons, and that language is the force capable of unifying in a long lasting way the submitted regions."(Gruzinski,1996:531). Nebrija's advice to Isabel de Castilla is that if his grammar were used, she "very soon will impose her yoke on many barbarians who spoke foreign languages."(Gruzinski,1996:341.).
- 9.- In the original Spanish is:"promover el hispanismo como lengua común no solo para la comunicación, sino para la identificación entre culturas..."
- 10.- To ask someone to speak in Christian means that he or she should speak in a proper, clear and comprehensive way.
- 11.- According to Michel Foucault racism is a "fundamental mechanism of power"(2004:230), inscribed within the mechanisms of the state through the bio-power. Almost every modern state functions through the exercise of racism . (Cf. (2004:230.).
- 12.- In the original Spanish is:"Nunca fue nuestra lengua de imposición sino de encuentro, a nadie se le obligó nunca a hablar en castellano: fueron los pueblos más diversos quienes hicieron suyos por voluntad libérrima el idioma de Cervantes".
- 13.- In the original Spanish is:"Y allá en América ocurrió un genocidio espantoso, Al principio del siglo XVI había 80 millones de habitantes autóctonos, de los que quedaron a mediados de este siglo únicamente 10 millones, por unas causas o por otras. Y en México,de 23.1 millones de habitantes en 1519, de las diferentes culturas: Azteca, Olmeca, Tolteca y Maya, sin embargo, en 1593 quedaban solamente 1.7 millones".
- 14.- In the original Spanish is:"consolidar la enseñanza del idioma español en Estados Unidos de la mano de nuestros hermanos mexicanos".
- 15.- Such statement have been made by the current Principal of the UNAM, Dr. Ramón de la Fuente, who is also a member of the Cervantes Institute. (cf.La Jornada, October 17,2003). In the original Spanish is: y defender el español "como un mecanismo de defensa de nuestra cultura y nuestros valores, algo que se ha demostrado que funciona muy bien desde el siglo XVI."
- 16.-Conferences of the Spanish language are celebrated each three years in different cities where Spanish is spoken, places such as, Zacatecas, Mexico, 1997, Valladolid, Spain, 2001, Rosario, Argentina, 2004.
- 17.- To date, there have been fifteen Conferences of The International Association of Hispanists.
- 18.- In the original Spanish is:" que avanza desde el uso natural de nuestra lengua...para llegar más allá del lenguaje y profundizar, sobre todo, en el ser humano."
- 19.- In the original Spanish is: "vamos encaminados a una curiosa homogeneización del idioma...Todos eliminan los localismos". Humberto López Morales is the Secretary general of the Association of the Academies of the Spanish Languages.
- 20.- In the original Spanish is: "cuando se habla de reconquista de la Antigua extensión del Imperio Español en Norteamérica debemos atender el llamado de alerta que nos pide ir más allá del recuento de cuántos hablan nuestra lengua, a la cuestión de si el Castellano es competitivo en los campos científicos, filosóficos, informativos y literarios en todo el mundo."

21.- Miguel León Portilla is a member of The *Colegio Nacional*, he is a Prince of Asturias prize, and is a notable *nahuatlato* and one of the most important translators of Nahuatl documents into Spanish.

22 "There is no surplus-value without sub-power"(Foucault,1994:vol.2:622).

23.- Last October 2004 was constituted the committee to celebrate in 2005 the year of the Ibero American year of reading, and the IV centenary of the Quijote. For this celebration the commitment is to promote reading that book, and thus,"that Hispanic America will recognize their language and their literature, as well as their vision of the world" (Statement made by the Mexican Principal of the National Council of culture and Arts. Milenio, October 28, 2004).

24.-The Mexican publisher association data indicates that nowadays there are about 400 books shops in the whole country, which is the 40% less of bookshop than what existed in 1997.

25.- Subjectivity is "the process through which the constitution of subject is produced...which is not, evidently, but one of the possibilities given to the organization of the conscience of one self."(1994:vol.4:706).

26.- Subjectivity for Foucault is not related to the psychoanalysis, it must be understood in a political sense because "we are kind of prisoners of certain conceptions of ourselves and of our conduct. We must change our subjectivity, our relation with ourselves"(Foucault,1994:vol.4:38-39). To "de-subjectivate ourselves is sort of political action that can lead us to fashion our life, so struggles are against the submission of subjectivity"(Foucault,1983:213).For him, "subjectivity is the way the subject makes the experience of the self within a game of truth where there is a relation with the self.(Foucault, 1994:4:633.).

27.-El País, Televisa radio with Televisa Mexico, publishing houses as Alfaguara and Taurus, and the *Fundación Santillana*, The Estrella de oro Multimedia group; Univision and Telemundo Television, etc, and many radio stations.

28.- Televisa, the most important television corporation in Mexico organized a conference called "To Communicate Hispanism" where the main subject was the cultural integration of the American Spanish speakers. (Reforma, Jun 17, 2001).

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